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fessor Hart's book. The principal criticism to be made, however, is that the author has undertaken too much. Indeed, he frankly admits (p. 263) that the function of the book is strictly at an end with Part III. Part IV contains a chapter on Poetry, one on Metre, one on Oratory and Debate (with a slightly modified treatment this chapter might have been included in Part I), and one on the History of the English Language. In this attempt at comprehensiveness, the earlier book is followed; and these features will doubtless help to win acceptance for the new book in some quarters. The writer says that it has been his "endeavor to make the book *available both for school and for college*" (italics are the writer's). In this difficult undertaking he has, perhaps, succeeded as well as any one could succeed; the book will meet the needs of many schools and of some colleges. The more advanced treatment of Professor Hill's book is better suited to students who have some maturity of mind, and who have had a good elementary training in English Composition.

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MIRACLE PLAYS.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES,

SIRS:—In your issue for February, Prof. E. G. Bourne makes the following rather remarkable statement, with reference to the earliest presentation of miracle plays:

"So far as I have noticed, the historians of the drama do not find positive proof of the presentation of miracle plays earlier than the thirteenth century."

Now, Prof. Bourne must surely have overlooked at least three of the best and best known authorities on this subject. By referring to either Klein,¹ or ten Brink,² or Creizenach³ he could easily have found the most positive proof of their earlier presentation among several of the

¹ *Geschichte des Dramas*, iii-iv, Leipzig, 1866, 1874.

² *Geschichte der englischen Litteratur*, ii, Strassburg, 1893.

³ *Geschichte des neueren Dramas*, i, Halle, 1893.

leading nations of that era, but, of course, *not in Italy*. Prof. Bourne seems to be under the impression that modern historians of the drama consider Italy the home of miracle plays or of *geistliche Spiele* in general! Of course, it is mere presumption in me to call attention to the fact, well known to all who are acquainted with the historical development of the modern drama, that Italy stands probably fourth in chronological order in the development and presentation of miracle and mystery plays. However, I hope I may be pardoned for giving a few passages here from the authors mentioned above, which bear directly on the point in question.

But, first, as to "Bishop Liutprand's narrative of his embassy to Constantinople in 968," Creizenach says (p. 355 f.):

"Auch aus dem Gebiete des oströmischen Reiches hat sich kein einziges Werk erhalten, das als geistliches Drama im eigentlichen Sinne des Wortes zu bezeichnen wäre. Doch scheint es, dass auch dort mitunter Aufführungen von geistlichen Dramen in der Kirche stattfanden. Ausführlichere Bericht über solche Dramen sind, soviel ich weiss, nicht vorhanden."

In a foot-note (p. 356) to the last sentence he remarks:

"Wenn Liutprand in dem Berichte über seine Gesandtschaftsreise 968 erzählt, dass die Griechen am 20. Juli die Himmelfahrt des Elias mit scenischen Spielen feierten (*Monumenta Germ. Scriptt.* 3, 353 f.), so geht aus seinen Worten nicht mit Bestimmtheit hervor, dass er Aufführungen in der Kirche meinte."

In regard to "religious plays" in Greek literature, Creizenach says further in this connection (p. 356, and note 2):

"Die geistlichen Dichtungen in dialogischer Form welche die mittelgriechische Litteratur aufzuweisen hat, sind ohne Zweifel als Buchdramen zu betrachten. Das eine die *Ζητοὶ εἰς τὸν Ἀδάμ* des Diakons Ignatios (c. 820) behandelt im 143 Trimetern den Sündenfall. Das andere, der leidende Christus (*Χριστὸς πάσχων*), von einem unbekannten Dichter wahrscheinlich im 11. oder 12. Jahrhundert verfasst, ist eine geschmacklose Künstelei⁴ Vgl. zu dem Obigen die Darstellung in Krumbachers *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur*, München, 1891; besonders S. 296, 348, 356 ff. Sathas, hat eine ausführliche Monographie

⁴ For a detailed description of this piece, cf. Klein, iii, 599 ff

über das byzantinische Theater verfasst (*Ἰστορικὸν δοκίμιον περὶ τοῦ θεάτρου καὶ τῆς μουσικῆς τῶν Βυζαντινῶν*, Venedig, 1879), die indes, wie Krumbacher mit Recht bemerkt, *den Leser nur in dem Glauben an die Dramenlosigkeit der byzantinischen Zeit bestärken kann.*⁵

As to the origin of *geistliche Spiele*, we find the following in Klein, iv, p. 12. Cf. Creizenach, p. 47 f.

"Als die ältesten gottesdienstlichen, von Geistlichen in den Kirchen dialogisch recitirten u. gesungenen Mysteriendramen gelten bis jetzt die vier, nebst noch sechs andern, von Monmerqué für die Gesellschaft der Bibliophilen herausgegebenen Mysterien aus dem 11. Jahrhundert, in lateinischer Sprache: Die Mysterie von den Magiern; vom Betlehemit. Kindermord; von der Auferstehung, und die von der Erscheinung in Emaus."

Further on p. 14 Klein, in speaking of Miracle plays in the strict sense, says:

"Um zwei Jahrhundert mindesten gehen die aus der heiligen Legende entsprossenen *Mirakelspiele* den bekannt frühesten Mysteriendramen voran. Schon das 10. Jahrh. hat uns in dem Wunder- und Bekehrungsspiel der Nonne Hroswitha diese Dramengattung in ihrer vollen Blüthe gezeigt; als eine classische Nachblüthe und als die Schlüsselblumen zugleich des künftigen Mirakelflors. Das nach Hroswitha's Legendendramen nächstälteste Mirakelspiel von der heil. Catharina, das jener, nach England an die Klosterschule von Saint-Alban berufene Godofredus aus der Normandie zu Dunstaple in anglo-normännischer (französischer) Sprache verfasste und daselbst von seinen Schülern aufführen liess, fällt in den Anfang des 12. Jahrh. (1110). . . . Doch war Geoffroy's (Godsfredus) Mirakelspiel von der heil. Catharina keineswegs das erste in England. Vielmehr wurden den Guilelmus Stephens zu folge, welcher ein halbes Jahrh. vor Math. Paris schrieb, schon vor Geoffroy's Mirakel der heil. Catharina dergleichen Spiel aus dem Leben der Heiligen, aber allem Anscheine nach, in lateinischer Sprache dargestellt."⁶

Creizenach has given in Book ii of vol. i, a very interesting and exhaustive description of the origin and development of these plays in France, beginning with the eleventh century. Moreover, Davidson⁷ has not only made a very interesting and thorough study of religious plays of all sorts, tracing their his-

⁵ Cf. also Morley, *English Writers*, iii, p. 104 f. London, 1895. Creizenach, i, p. 157 f.; ten Brink, p. 247 f.

⁶ *Studies in the English Mystery Plays*, by Charles Davidson. Yale University, 1892.

torical development among different peoples, but he has also reprinted three of these plays in part; namely, the *Freising* (Tenth century), *Orléans* (Twelfth century) and *Rouen* (Fourteenth century).⁷

Ten Brink says⁸ with regard to the early presentation of miracle plays in England: "In der zweiten Hälfte des zwölften Jahrhunderts begann man in England Mirakelspiele auch öffentlich vor allem Volk aufzuführen."

Klein, ten Brink and Creizenach all show quite conclusively that these plays, originating in France, were thence transplanted into England, Germany, Spain, and Italy, and that, too, mainly through the medium of the Roman Catholic Church. They are first heard of in Italy, as Prof. Bourne quoting Ebert correctly says, in 1244,⁹ in Spain, but only in their oldest and simplest form, in the eleventh century.¹⁰ There are very few remains *des mittelalterlich geistlichen Dramas* in Scandinavian literature. Nevertheless says Creizenach (p. 350),

"hat sich ein schwedisches Marienmirakel erhalten; die Handschrift wird in die zweite Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts gesetzt."

"Unter den slavischen Völkern sind die Czechen die einzigen, bei denen sich geistliche Spiele aus dem Mittelalter erhalten haben" (cf. p. 351 f.).

We thus see that the "interesting question" of the independent development of the miracle plays among different peoples has long since become a subject of consideration for historians of dramatic literature, and of these latter both Klein and Creizenach are of the opinion that these plays had their origin on French soil and spread thence principally through religious influence over all civilized Europe (cf. Creizenach, pp. 356-361).

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GERMAN w- INTO FRENCH gu-

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES,

SIRS:—The fact is generally acknowledged

⁷ Cf. Davidson, p. 247.

⁸ P. 247.

⁹ Creizenach, p. 300.

¹⁰ Creiz., p. 346.